



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN MALAYSIAN MAGAZINE :
A CASE STUDY ON CLEO**

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This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Education with Honours
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I would like to express my special gratitude to my Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, for His endless blessings in completing this final year project. Millions of thanks to Him. Thanks for patiently guiding and supporting me throughout the completion of this project and also thanks to all the other supervisors who are tremendously helpful. I would like to thank those wonderful friends who helped me collecting the magazines for this project especially Oliver and Sing Yee. My deepest gratitude goes to my beloved parents who are always there supporting me. Then, I would also like to say thank you to all the UCI members and all my special friends for their prayers, supports and love. Finally, special thanks also to Dean who has never failed to care, support and encourage me throughout the completion of this project.

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ABSTRACT

THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN MALAYSIAN MEDIA

ERLINDA MIKAL

This study aims to identify the portrayal of women in Malaysian media (Cleo Magazines 2006) which is grounded on feminism. The objectives of this study are to find terms (noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives) used to describe women and to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse in the language used based on the feminist theory. It is a case study using discourse analysis at the word and phrase level, particularly based on systemic functional grammar. The findings showed that the terms used to describe women in the magazine were either neutral or non-neutral (sexist) terms. It also showed that sexist discourse especially exclusive terms for female existed in the language used in the magazines.

ABSTRAK

PENG GAMBARAN WANITA DALAM MEDIA MALAYSIA

ERLINDA MIKAL

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti penggambaran wanita dalam media massa Malaysia (Majalah Cleo 2006) yang didasarkan atas feminisme. Objektif-objektif kajian adalah untuk mengetahui kata dan frasa (kata nama, kata kerja dan kata sifat) yang digunakan untuk menggambarkan wanita dan menilai kewujudan penggunaan bahasa seksis berdasarkan teori feminis. Kajian ini adalah kajian kes yang menggunakan analisis wacana di peringkat perkataan dan pernyataan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan kata dan frasa yang digunakan untuk menggambarkan wanita adalah neutral dan tidak neutral (seksis). Selain itu, hasil kajian juga menunjukkan kewujudan wacana seksis terutamanya wacana yang eksklusif untuk wanita dalam penggunaan bahasa dalam majalah tersebut.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter describes the background of the research problem. It also explains on the aims and objectives of the study, significance of the study, operational definition of terms and the scope of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

The relationship between media and gender is so crucial that it is widely discussed and researched. Media and communication are the central elements in modern life, while, gender and sexuality are how people think about their identities (Gauntlett, 2002). According to Gauntlett (2002) media portrays and contains so many images of men and women alike that it is impossible it has not impact on human's own sense of identity. In the modern societies, people typically consume many hours in front of television, looking at magazines, books or go to movies, etc. It seems obvious and inevitable, then, that we will be affected by these experiences (Gauntlett, 2002). Gauntlett (2002) also stated that this is mainly because the media shows us situations and relationships from other people's points of view. It is also because of the external fascination of drama that we can see 'how the world works' in

lives other than our own. Therefore, it could affect our own way of conducting ourselves, and our expectations of other people's behaviour. For example, in women and men magazines, they contain all kinds of advices on how to live, look and interact. Even if we only "read these items in ironic state of mind, it must all sink in somewhere" (Gauntlett, 2002, p. 2). Based on previous studies on media and gender, women have been portrayed stereotypically throughout the media such as television or magazines. The images and messages conveyed were bias and degrading the value of women worldwide which can affect on women's behaviours and others' perceptions towards women.

In the media, language plays a very crucial role in conveying message to readers as a medium to deliver the authors' beliefs and opinions. Authors' knowledge, beliefs, opinions and motivations about an issue will be reflected through their choice of words which will be read by the readers in which may affect the readers' knowledge, beliefs, opinions and motivation. Language is a powerful tool which is "perceived as the medium through which the self is formed and which shapes the way that we think about the world" (Mills, 1995, p. 14). Cameron (1992) also stated that language is a "weapon" used by the powerful to oppress and silence their subordinates; nor is this belief unjustified.

However, language has done injustice towards women where there is an imbalance of words for both genders. This scenario can cause stereotyping which may degrade gender value. In a male-dominated culture, the language is expected to be controlled by men, whereas females are forced to develop their own language, meanings and translations. Additionally, Benedict (1992) had stated that there are more words for men than for women. Besides that, there are "more words available to insult women than men, especially in sexual terms, and that words for women's bodies are more taboo than those for men" (Cameron, 1992, p. 107). She also added that there are "insult-words for women who have too much sex (*slag*) and women who have too little (*pricktease*); women can be tasty and at the same time *cunts*. The

same behaviours engaged in by men are described admiringly (a male 'slag' is a *stud*)" (Cameron, 1992, p. 108).

Realizing the importance and the problems of language in portraying women in the media, this study focuses on the language used to portray women in Malaysian media, particularly, magazines. Besides that, the study serves the purpose to add in the database of language and media research since there are limited number of studies done on language and media especially on women's portrayals.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to Cameron (1992), sexist discourse refers to ideas and practices that treat either sex 'unfairly' or even just differently which applied to both men and women. Gunther (1985) stated that sexist discourse is about the socialisation of the natural category of sex as gender. That socialisation has massively far-reaching effects on all of social life; on families and family structures; on work and lack of work; on leisure; on how men and women are to see themselves and their possibilities of action; on larger scale, political structures. In short, there are few areas of social and cultural life which are not affected by the prescriptions of sexist discourse.

Therefore, prior to the influence of sexist discourse in women's daily life, this study serves to analyse on the language used in best seller women's magazines, *Cleo* using discourse analysis. Even though the research does not study on the effects on the use of sexist discourse, the results of the study may show how or how not sexist discourse is used.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study focuses on the language used in a Malaysian women magazine which is *Cleo* for the year 2006. Therefore, the objectives of this study are;

- a) to look at the terms used to describe women in the magazines such as noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives,
- b) and to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse in the magazine.

1.4 Significance of the study

Studies on portrayal of women in the media are mostly based on content and semiotic analyses. However, “feminist critics tend to focus on content analysis alone, and this is perhaps one of their greatest shortcomings, since their claims are often based on untenable theoretical positions” (Mills, 1995, p. 14). She also added that the critic using content analysis has to assume a single meaning for the text in which it is possible to claim whatever interpretation they like for a text with “no agreed criteria for assessing how one reading might be better than another” (Mills, 1995, p. 14).

However, this study is done using discourse analysis which is based on the feminist theory to further support the findings and discussions on the existence of sexist discourse. Discourse analysis is concerned with the context accompanying the texts and not merely analyzing words in isolation which are relevant for this study. Besides that, there are a limited number of studies which concentrating on how the language used portrays women in the media. Therefore, this study will add to the research database on language and media especially on portrayal of women.

Besides that, sexist discourse is an on-going debate among the linguists claiming that women are being degraded in terms of language. Gender-biased language has forced the feminists to rise up and voice up the imbalance of words used for both men and women. Fewer words to describe women indicate an understatement towards women in which may degrade the value of a woman. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the extent to which the text is ruled by sexist discourse through this study

Lastly, the result of this study will be useful for future media activists who wish to avoid gender-bias language towards women. Therefore, in the future, media activists will be more cautious and critical in using language to portray not only women, but also men alike.

1.5 Operational definitions of terms

1.5.1 Portrayal of women

According to Kee (2005), consistently throughout Asia, women have been portrayed in the media as victims, subservient, nurturing, sacrificing and objectified sexualized beings. Women have been inaccurately represented in the media and also neglected especially in their contributions towards the socio-political and economic development of society.

In media, language, one of the many important mediums, is used to convey messages about women. Language has shaped the way readers portray women in the media, positively or negatively. For example, the term 'slut' is used to describe a woman who has multiple sex partners but there is no specific term for a man who has multiple sex partners. There are other words that portray women through language such as nouns, adjectives and verbs that indicate the values of women in media.

1.5.2 Sexist Discourse

According to Cameron (1992), sexism is often used to refer to ideas and practices that treat either sex 'unfairly', or even just differently. Sexism occurs in many areas such as social treatments and language. Sexism in language or sexist discourse, particularly, "might not mean only expressions that exclude, insult or trivialise women, but also do the same thing to men" (Cameron, 1992, p. 99). However, according to Cameron (1992), sexism in language is one manifestation of the system (sexism), and it works to the disadvantage of women, not men.

Therefore, in this study the focus will be on analyzing the language used to portray women and to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse based on the feminist theory. The researcher focuses on the neutral terms to describe women and then on “expressions that exclude, insult or trivialise women” to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse (Cameron, 1992, p. 99).

1.6 Scope of the study

For the purpose of this study, featured articles on the cover are chosen for analysis while omitting quizzes and interviews. Featured articles on the cover indicate that these articles are assumed to attract female readers. Year 2006 is chosen as it is the latest year of the magazine publication which closely portrays the women of this era.

Besides that, the study only analyses the language used and none is done on the images accompanying the articles. The analysis is also excluding interviews and quizzes. The study is only on the word and phrase levels which are noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe women.

However, in this study, readers’ opinions and the effects of the portrayals on readers are not analyzed.

1.7 Chapter Review

This chapter has described and explained on the background of this study in which a number of researches had been done on this study on different area or aspect. It also has explained on the statement problem on issues of how women have been portrayed wrongly through media. Therefore, significantly, this study is to further investigate the portrayal of women in Malaysian setting that is Malaysian women’s magazines (*Cleo* 2006). Then, the operational terms that have been explained and

defined are portrayal of women, feminist theory and sexist discourse. Last but not least, this chapter has also included the scope of the study.

In the following chapter, the literature reviews which are the most relevant to this study are presented.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains the reviews of previous studies on portrayals of women in media. It starts with the effects of wrong portrayal of women. Then, it moves on to the explanation of language and sexism and language and gender.

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the reviews of previous studies on portrayals of women in media. It starts with the effects of wrong portrayal of women. Then, it moves on to the explanation of language and sexism and language and gender.

2.1.1 Previous Studies on Portrayals of Women in the Media

Most of the studies are previously on portrayals of women in the media are general analyses. For example, the studies done by Taylor (1990) and Scharrer, (1992) are general studies. This study is an extension of the general analysis conducted by Taylor (1990).

In a study done by Taylor (1990), a research was conducted on women's images in television news. The study focused on the portrayal of women in news reports. The study found that women are portrayed in a stereotypical way. The study also found that women are portrayed in a negative way. The study also found that women are portrayed in a way that is not representative of the real world. The study also found that women are portrayed in a way that is not representative of the real world.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter provides the reviews of previous studies on portrayals of women in the media. It also touches on the effects of wrong portrayal of women. Then, it moves on to the explanation of language and sexism and language and gender.

2.1 Previous Studies on Portrayals of Women in the Media

Most of the studies done previously on portrayal of women in the media are content analysis. For example, the studies done by Peirce (1990) and Schlenker, Caron, & Halteman (1997) - as an extension of the content analysis conducted by Peirce (1990).

In a study done by Peirce (1990), a research was conducted on women's magazine fiction on roles, attributes, and occupations of main characters using content analysis. All large-circulation (more than one million) national women's magazines that published fiction during the 1990s and with similar audiences were chosen for analysis. The findings showed that changes have taken place in women's magazine fiction. The characters are not necessarily the stereotypically attractive and

middle-class but married women in the 26-35 age groups who live with one to two children in a house in the city that Bailey and Loughlin are found. Three in which of the theme is romance, while others are marital problems or contentment in relationship but as the years go by the theme has changed to family happiness. Few of the characters were anything but white Americans. Besides that, the characters are dependent with stereotypical female jobs.

The second study was done by Schlenker, Caron, & Halteman (1997) as an extension of the content analysis conducted by Peirce (1990). The study explored the content of Seventeen magazines in the years 1945, 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, and 1995 to determine if the articles that are presented have changed in response to the feminist movement from the 1940s to present day. Feminist writers have suggested that the strongest waves of feminism occurred in the 1940s and 1970s, and in the 1990s. Results indicate that there is a relationship between the content of Seventeen magazines, in terms of traditional vs. feminist messages, and the women's movement (Schlenker, Caron, & Halteman, 1997). The present study also found a higher percentage of feminist messages in the content of 1945 and 1995 issues of Seventeen. Although there has been an increase in feminist content of Seventeen magazine in the study, the changes are minor and still do not reflect the roles of teenage girls. When analyzing the content of Seventeen magazines, one may wonder what are the concerns and interests of a modern teenage girl. However, the content of this publication does not seem to reflect the aspirations and levels of achievement in which young women are capable. Even in the 1990s, this publication, still does not address most of the intellectual issues concerning young women. Despite the active women's movement, a wide gap still exists between what is and what should be (Schlenker, Caron, & Halteman, 1997)

Additionally, Luther (n.d.), an associate professor, conducted a study on how women are portrayed in the media, and noticed that women tend to be more sexualized. For example, in Seventeen Magazine, the most common messages sent to girls were the ones about appearance and attracting the opposite sex. Based on this

study, it implies that girls are more interested about their appearance and how to attract their male counterparts.

Then, according to Hinders (2007) a study was conducted in 1998 to examine the themes of sexual behaviour in teenage girl magazines. The study conducted a textual analysis of a variety of magazines, including YM, Teen and Seventeen. The study found that these magazines encouraged readers to present themselves as sexually desirable, develop the skills of sexual therapy to enhance men's sexual pleasure and performance, and become communication teachers to help men become better relational partners (Hinders, 2007). Nevertheless, the findings also showed that the themes are balanced with a mixture of diverse themes.

Media Awareness Network (n.d.) noted that sports commentators (97% of whom are men) use different language when they talk about female athletes. Where men are described as "big", "strong", "brilliant", "gutsy" and "aggressive", women are often referred to as "weary", "fatigued", "frustrated", "panicked", "vulnerable" and "choking". Besides that, commentators are also twice as likely to call men by their last names only and three times as likely to call women by their first names only. Media Awareness Network (n.d) argues that this indicates that female athletes take the role of children, while male athletes are seen as adult.

Based on the studies above, all results show that there is an existence of sexism in the media in which can cause problems in gender issues. All the studies above were done in the Western which indicates that there is still lack of researches done on Malaysian media especially on portrayal of women.

2.2 Effects of Stereotypical Portrayal of Women

The way in which women is represented in news media send important message to the viewing, listening and reading publics about women's place, women's roles and women's lives. According to Blazevic (2007), the media portrayal of women has

a certain influence on young girls. For example, in the Seventeen Magazine, young girls may place more importance in their appearance and getting the right guy, instead of trying to develop and improve themselves. Besides that, the pressure of looking good can lead to some dangerous behaviour for a certain age. Surveys have shown that girls at age of 8 or 9 are already concerned about their bodies, their looks and fashion (Blazevic, 2007). Therefore, TV shows, advertisements, music videos and magazines carry a responsibility towards their audience since they are the ones who can be influenced easier than the others. This is mainly because their personalities, however developed, are still not strong enough to resist certain pressures (Blazevic, 2007). Blazevic (2007) also noted that Feminist scholars and eating disorder theorists have long claimed how the media is creating pressure on females to pursue ideal body and to reach their (media's) standards of beauty. Magazines have been criticized to be advocates and promoters of the desirability of an unrealistic and dangerously thin ideal.

For the purpose of this study, the words and phrases used in the magazines are analysed. This is mainly because the crucial relationship between language and identity which later have an impact on women readers. According to Cameron (1998), there are various labels we apply to ourselves and each other and the subject of labelling is clearly of some importance. Cameron (1998) also added that language is a powerful device for labelling and categorizing. The importance of language and identity is further elaborated by Mills (1995) in which the theory of linguistic determinism is put forward. The theory of linguistic determinism suggests that differences in the structures of language actually determine the different views societies have of the world. Furthermore, it is suggested that the language of a culture shapes the way its speakers see the world.

It is possible to analyse this argument as consisting of two stages. The first stage- that people name the world differently, emphasizing different aspects, depending on what is most relevant to their way of life – is not too problematic. We assume that a language responds to the needs of a community, and the fact that some languages have a great number of ready-made ways of describing certain phenomena, and others do not, is seen to reflect what those cultures find relevant and important to their way of life

(Mills, 1995).

Mills (1995) stated that linguistic determinism argues 'that language produces our perception of the world'. According to this second stage of the argument, our thought-systems are influenced by the language formed by our community and that 'reality' is constrained by the linguistic forms available to us as members of that community. In fact, the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group (Mills, 1995). In other words, there is no two languages are ever entirely similar as it represents the social reality. According to Mills (1995), there are 3 main effects of sexist language use. Firstly, it may alienate female interlocutors and cause them to feel that they are not being addressed. Secondly, it may be one of the factors which may cause women to view themselves in a negative or stereotyped way. It may thus have an effect in the expectations of women and men have of what women can do. Then, it may confuse listeners (or readers), both male and female (for example, as to whether a true generic noun or pronoun is being used or a gender-specific one)

Language is indeed a powerful device that can cause stereotypical portrayals of women in the media in which affected women readers. In media, language is used to construct norm which constrains and confined women to what the society of that language is expected of women. Even though this study does not analyse on the

effects of stereotyped portrayals, this study can be the landmark of many researches to come on the effects.

2.3 Language and sexism

The most controversial issue in language and gender is sexism. Therefore, in this study discourse analysis is used to study the terms used to portray women and to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse in the magazines. According to Renner (2005), sexism is a system of beliefs and practices that affirm the dominance of men over women. Renner (2005) also added that sexism pervades social relations and institutions, affecting everything from people's domestic arrangement to their career choices.

Adding to that, according to Wilks (2002), in Latin language, there is a rather peculiar grammatical rule which states that if a single man is in crowd of women, the speaker must address the crowd in the masculine plural form, not masculine which indicates the patriarchal society the Latin speakers live in. Unlike English, the word "guy" or "guys" is commonly used to indicate any variety of a group from all male to all female. Hence, it is not a rule to use masculine plural words when addressing a mixed crowd; it is simply the vernacular (Wilks, 2002). In addition, there is apparent use of gender biased vocabulary in the English language concerning cuss words in which the majority involve women in some insulting pattern. The cuss words are such as "mother fucker", "bitch", "son of a bitch", "bastard" and "whore". Wilks (2002) suggested that the use of these words probably relate to the prohibition put on woman's sexual enjoyment during most of American and English history.

According to Renner (2005), many feminists have claimed that the use of generic masculine terms is more than just a symbolic declaration of women's lesser status. Some would argue that the use of the English generic masculine is more damaging to women's interests; that it impedes communication and encourages discrimination.

According to Mills (1995), the argument about how language influences our perception of the world is important to feminists for a number of reasons. There have been many critical feminist surveys of English lexis (Nilsen et al. 1977; Schultx 1990; J. Mills 1989), which have argued that sexism is inherent in many of the labels which English speakers use. Other feminists have written about lexical gaps in the language – women's experiences which they find hard to talk about, because English provides them with no readily available term (Spender 1980). It is frequently argued that these usages, and others detailed below, reveal how sexist our society is. Feminists taking this position argue that language reforms are in essence pointless, because as long as society is sexist, sexist meanings will reappear, and to change language forms is to deal with the symptoms, not the cause.

2.3.1 Language and Gender

The relationship between language and gender is very crucial that it has been widely discussed and studied world wide. According to Renner (2005), gender is a salient distinction in English; its importance is underlined in ways that men and women are described and portrayed so differently. For example, men and women in English-speaking culture are given different personal names, have distinct address forms, are denoted by gender-marked pronouns, differing adjectives can be used to describe their attributes and so forth (Renner, 2005). Therefore, these linguistic conventions encourage English speakers to pay attention to gender whether or not it is relevant. This implies that the language used to describe a gender is not only based on how the writers value their subjects but also the restrictions of the language itself which leads to stereotypical portrayal of gender.

An article by The Empire State College, State University of New York, stated that in English language, gender exclusive language discriminates on the basis of gender. It consists of words or phrases that focus on one gender unnecessarily,

thereby excluding the other gender. According to Wilks (2002), English language does not have the luxury of using universal gender pronouns. Wilks (2002) also added that, in most conversational or written English, the pronoun “he” is substituted when gender is either unknown or unspecified. And, in some cases people try to remove any gender from the sentence by using the third person plural form (they or them), instead of the singular form when talking about a single person (Wilks, 2002). Unlike English, Latin has specifically masculine, feminine and neuter words that English entirely lacks. Some Latin words can even hold both either gender. This implies that English is limited in describing both genders equally without being gender bias.

2.3.2 Sexist Language and Sexist Discourse

According to Cameron (1998), language is a major component of any human culture. It encodes a culture’s preoccupations and its values; it is one of the main means whereby these are transmitted to children and other newcomers to the community. Many strands in the feminist critique of language have concerned themselves with what languages tell their users and their learners about gender and about women.

On the whole, feminists have concluded that our languages are sexist. They represent or ‘name’ the world from a masculine viewpoint and in accordance with stereotyped beliefs about women, men and the relationship between them (Cameron, 1998).

2.3.3 Language and Feminism

According to Cameron (1992), feminism is a movement for the full humanity of women. In media, portrayals of women are problematic especially in the use of language as a medium of representation in which it does not represent women in full

humanity. Therefore, language is a concern in contemporary feminism “through the preoccupation of the early second wave (in the late 1960s and early 1970s) with ‘images of women’, that is representations (language)” (Cameron, 1992, p. 4).

Cameron (1992) also added that early feminist analyses of language generally rested on the notion of ‘conditioning’ in which means that repeated exposure to stereotypes and distortions will cause readers to believe them and take them for granted.

Realizing the fact that the value of woman is degraded through the use of language in media, the study is done to find out how women are specifically portrayed in a Malaysian magazine. The study is concerned with whether or not the language used portrays women in full humanity.

2.4 Summary

The studies on portrayal of women in the media are usually based on content analysis and little has been done on linguistic analysis. Besides that, there are also limited numbers of researches have been done specifically on portrayal of women in Malaysian media. Therefore, the study will represent the portrayal of women in the Malaysian media.

The media have always been blamed because of negative impacts they have on their audience. In fact, language as a medium of representation should be blamed for these negative impacts which are reinforced by the media. Language, particularly English, has restrictions in describing both genders equally in which the number of words for both genders is imbalance.

Therefore, this study will find out the terms used in describing woman in the magazines and evaluate the existence of sexist discourse in the Malaysian media.

This chapter has covered the reviews of previous studies on portrayals of women in the media. It also touches on the effects of stereotypical of portrayal of women. Then, it moves on to the explanation of language and sexism, language and gender as well as sexist discourse and sexist language.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The chapter describes the research design that is a text analysis using discourse analysis. It also discusses the texts for analysis, instruments and data collection, and the data analysis and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

In this study, case study research design is used. Case study is the most appropriate research design which allows a researcher to investigate a particular case, event and scenario within a limited period of time (Yin, 2003). As in this study, the research is an in-depth study on the language used in print news to explore the existence of some discourse based on the study subject. Furthermore, according to Jarral & Ahmed (2005), the main purpose of a case study is to expose the unique features of a case (i.e. object of study). Consequently, the study serves the purpose of exposing the neutral and objective printed news and its significant phrases, verb/verb phrases and adjectives to be used to explore "insights on how the writers value the subjects" (Gardner,

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter explains the research design that is a text analysis using discourse analysis. It goes on to describe the texts for analysis, instruments and data collection procedures. It also describes on data analysis and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

In this study, case study research design is used. Case study is the most appropriate as it is an in-depth study which allows a researcher to investigate a particular problem, detail and intensive within a certain period of time (Ismail & Ahmad, 2005). As in this study, the research is an in-depth study on the language used to portray women and to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse based on discourse analysis. Furthermore, according to Ismail & Ahmad (2005), the main purpose of case study method is “to expose the unique features of a case (i.e. object of interest)”. Consequently, this study serves the purpose of exposing the neutral and non-neutral (sexist) terms such as noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe women “depending on how the writers value the subjects” (Gunther, 1985).

For the purpose of this study, discourse analysis is used to analyze the language used in portraying women through media (magazines). According to Trask (1997), discourse analysis is defined as ‘an approach to studying the structure of discourse which involves applying the existing analytical devices of linguistics (systemic functional grammar) and looking for regularities in terms of these.’ Therefore, the terms that are going to be analyzed are at the word and phrase level; noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe woman.

Then, this study is done based on feminist theory which was influenced by feminism. Feminism is the movement for the full humanity of women (Cameron, 1992), while, feminists are the people who like to improve the range of possibilities for women. Therefore, in feminist theory, feminists fight for improvement in anything that goes against or degrades women.

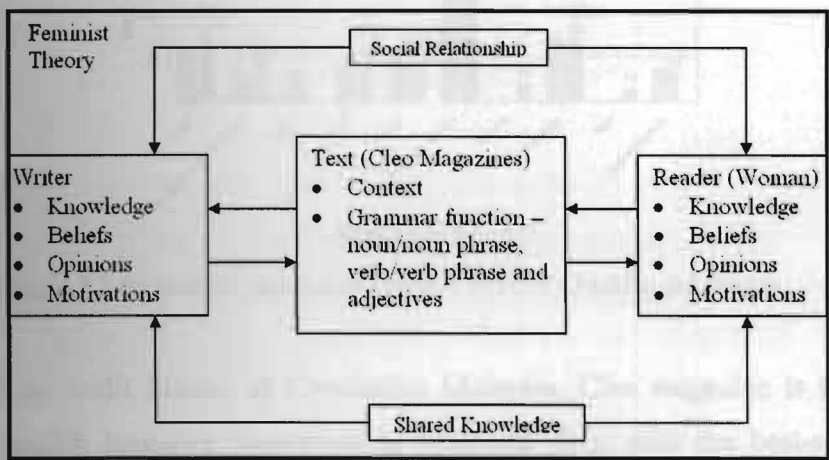


Figure 3.1 Theoretical Framework

3.2 Texts Selected for Analysis

For this study, the focus is on the language used to portray women in Malaysian media, particularly, magazines. Therefore, *Cleo* magazines, a women magazine, are chosen for analysis

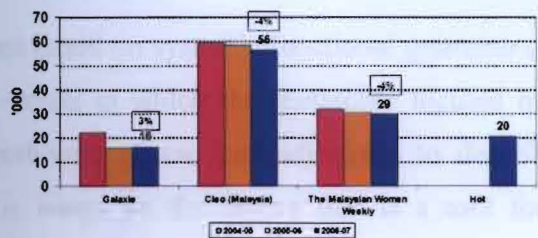


Figure 3.2 (a) Audited Circulation Trends – English Language Magazines

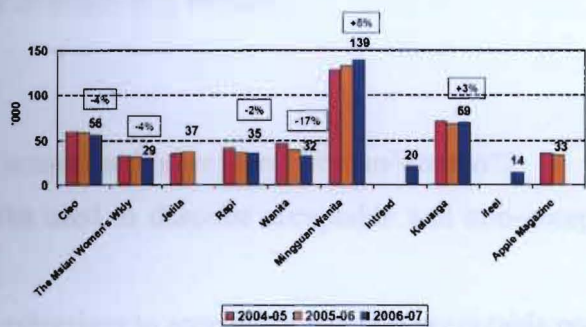


Figure 3.2 (b) Audited Circulation Trends – Women's Fashion and Beauty

Based on Audit Bureau of Circulation Malaysia, *Cleo* magazine is the best-seller for English language magazines in Malaysia. It is also the best-seller for English language women magazines. *Cleo* has the circulation of 71 000 with 120 000 readership. Its issues are released monthly which targets 17-29 year-old readers. *Cleo* magazines are also chosen because since it was launched in 1995, *Cleo* magazines shot to the top slot as Malaysia's best selling, English-language women's title within three years (ACP Magazine Specialist, 2004). *Cleo* is also described as a friend and mentor to readers in which the featured issues are confidence, naturalness, energy and fun. It is claimed to feature issues about friendships, inspirational figures, fashion, beauty, health, sports, travel and lifestyle (ACP Magazine Specialist, 2004). Therefore, it is relevantly used in this study because it has a wide range of readership

particularly women readers. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen the publications of *Cleo* magazines which are published in 2006 which is the latest publication parallel to the time of this study conducted.

3.3 Instruments for Data Collection

The study is done based on systemic functional grammar (discourse analysis) at the word and phrase levels in which the researcher focuses only on terms such as noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe woman. Systemic functional grammar is based on the theory that is a tool for understanding how language works, and for analysing language in use. Then, based on the findings, the researcher evaluates the existence of sexist discourse in the language used in the magazines especially in describing women.

Research questions:

1. What are the nouns used other than “woman/women”?
2. What are verbs used to describe acceptable and non-acceptable portrayal of women?
3. What are the adjectives to acceptable and non-acceptable portrayal of women?
4. What do the terms indicate about the portrayal of women?
5. Does sexist discourse exist in the magazines?

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

For the purpose of the study, discourse analysis is used to analyse the language used. The researched looks only at the word level; noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe woman.

Firstly, the researcher identifies the articles which are featured on the cover page and categorizes them to sections such as appearance, male-female relations, home, self-development, career development, political/world issues (Schlenker, Caron & Halteman, 1998).

After categorizing the articles, the researcher analyses the titles and reads thoroughly each article and locates the nouns, verbs and adjectives used in the magazines within the context. Then, the researcher looks at the noun/noun phrase used other than 'woman/women'. Next, the researcher looks at the verb/verb phrase and then adjectives used to describe women. After identifying these terms, the researcher evaluates the existence of sexist discourse in the language used based on the feminist theory.

3.5 Data Analysis

Firstly, the researcher analysed the titles used for the magazines by evaluating the portrayal of women. The titles on the front cover page of the magazine indicate that the titles are of the interest of women readers. Then, the researcher analyses the portrayal of women based on the noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe women by giving denotative and connotative meanings of these terms within the context of the articles.

Lastly, based on the analysis of the terms used to describe women, the researcher evaluates the existence of sexist language based on the feminist theory. Example of the analysis is shown below.

"Are you (*the reader*) happy with your looks? In the right hands, cosmetic surgery can benefit you for life."

The presuppositions are:

1. that you are not happy with your looks;
2. that this woman (picture on the advertisement) is happy with her looks;
3. that this woman has had surgery

The inference is:

1. If you want to be happy with your looks you will need surgery.

(Mills, 1995, p.133)

3.6 Limitations of the Study

Researcher's early assumptions of negative and stereotypical portrayal of women may lead researcher to locate irrelevant evidences of portrayal of women. This may affect the findings of the study. Therefore, to minimize this problem, the researcher analyses the findings based on the feminist theory.

Besides that, the researcher covers only at the word and phrase level of systemic functional grammar in this study while omitting other categories which may or may not relevant in this study. Therefore, this study may not be able to accurately show the real portrayal of women.

The study is done only on the articles featured on the cover in which means that other articles are omitted. Therefore, this study does not represent the portrayal of women in all the content of the magazines.

Lastly, the study is done only to find out the portrayal of women and to evaluate the existence of sexist language in the magazines. There is no study on the readers' opinions and how the language affects the readers.

3.7 Chapter Review

This chapter has covered the significance of using case study as a research design. It has also described the texts which are selected for analysis and research questions used as the instrument in the study. Then, it has also explained on the data collection procedure and how to analyse the data collected. Lastly, it has explained on

the limitations of the study which are researcher’s subjective evaluation and the limitation in language categories the study covers.

In the next chapter, the researcher would collect all the data and analyse the data based on the data collection procedure in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The corpus of texts collected from the magazines are analysed to address the objectives of the study including to find the portrayal of women in the magazines. It is also to find out the objective effect on the portrayal of women on the title, cover, verb and adjectives used. It also aims to find the existence of sexist discourse in the magazines.

4.1. Data Collection Procedure in Female magazines

The texts that were collected in the magazines are noun/poun phrase, verb/verb phrase and noun/verb phrase. The titles of the articles are analysed. The titles were analysed to find out the effect of the title on the magazine. The titles for multi-female magazines and self-development will be more biased towards the portrayal of women compared to other magazines such as appearance, career development, financial and health magazines.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Overview

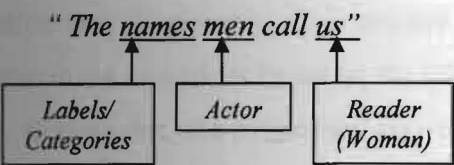
This chapter explains how texts from the magazines are analysed to address the objectives of the study which is to find the portrayal of woman in the magazines. It touches on the objectives which are the portrayal of women on the title, noun, verb and adjectives. Then, it goes on to the existence of sexist discourse in the magazines articles.

4.1. Terms Used to Describe Women in Female magazines

4.1.1. Title

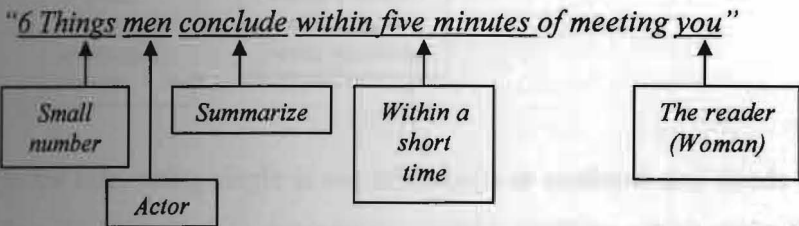
The terms that were analysed in the magazines are noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives. Firstly, the titles of the articles are analysed. The titles were analysed both on the cover and inside the magazine. The titles for male-female relationship and self-development articles are more biased towards the portrayal of women compared to other titles such as appearance, career development, financial and health issues.

The most apparent stereotypical portrayal of woman can be found in the magazines in which men label or categorize women. The examples are shown below.



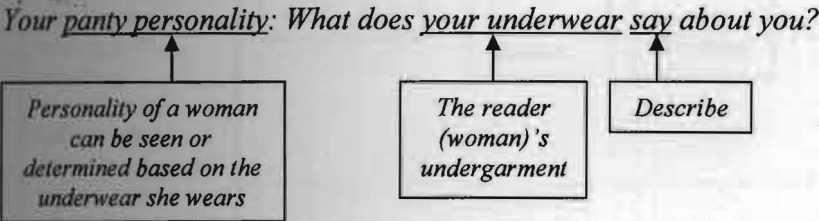
(Cleo, January)

The title suggests that men have undisclosed consensus about labelling woman and this also indicates that women’s personalities are shaped by men. Thus, the article places the authority to men to label women based on their preferences.

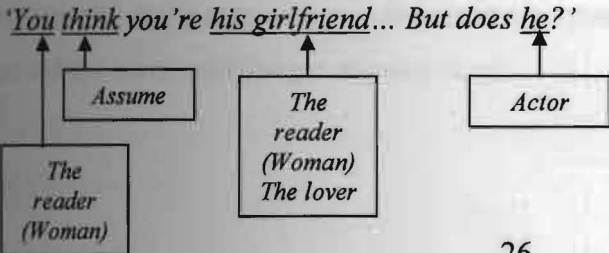


(Cleo, September)

The title suggests that men are able to interpret a woman in such a short time (5 minutes) and in countable ways (6 categories). Similarly, the title indicates that men have the authority to judge woman in a very short time.



(Cleo, June)



(Cleo, July)

The title suggests that the man is the one who decides whether or not the woman is his lover in which woman has the secondary authority to determine her position in a relationship. It is evident that there a bias towards the portrayal of woman in the magazines based on the titles.

Besides that, the magazines also contain discrimination towards single women in which the women are put to blame. There are several articles which suggest that desperate single women need to improve and update themselves to be sufficiently dateable. The examples are as shown below.

"The single girl guide to updating"

A lonely
and an
unattached
woman.

Being single is
outdated and
needs updating

(Cleo, December)

In the title, being single is out of fashion or outdated and needs updating. It portrays that single women do not possess certain qualities which make them desirable to the opposite sex.

"Desperately single: Why staying solo could harm you"

Showing a great
despair and
willing to do
anything
regardless of
danger when
being lonely and
unattached

Remain
unattached

Hurt or
cause
danger

The
reader
(Woman)

(Cleo, October)

The title above is being extremely discriminating in which being single is seen as harmful and dangerous. It indicates that women should get attached or married to avoid the harms and danger of being single.

Nevertheless, there are also titles which are not sexist or neutral. Most of these titles are focusing on working women and health.

“8 smart ways to blow your bonus”

The readers’
(women) income

(Cleo, December)

The title above is for the article that advices women on how to spend their money which also suggests that the target readers for this article are working women.

“The only way isn’t up”

The only way to
job promotion

(Cleo, April)

The target readers for the title above are working women who wish to have job promotion. It suggests that there is no single way to upgrade the status of their jobs.

“Should you go back to your old job?”

The readers
(women)

The readers’
previous jobs

(Cleo, November)

From the title, the article is targeted to working readers who have switched jobs or are job-hoppers.

Apart from articles on career wise, the neutral terms used to describe women are found in health articles. The titles are stated below.

"Stop energy thief: 18 unusual things that could be making you tired"

(Cleo, February)

"7 deadly health sins: Turn those vices into virtues for a healthier you"

(Cleo, March)

"Migraine, risk of heart attack and thinning bones: How a broken heart affects your health"

(Cleo, April)

"22 breast cancer myths busted...Plus facts that can lower your risk now!"

(Cleo, October)

4.1.2. Noun/ Noun Phrase

Nouns or noun phrases which are used to describe women in the magazines are both neutral and non-neutral terms (sexist). For the neutral terms, noun/noun phrase used are related to work and health. For example, 'you' and 'women' are used throughout the magazines.

However, there are several occurrences of sexist terms which are animal associated meanings (metaphor), sex symbol and labels for different types of women given by men.

a) Animal representation

Firstly, women are described excessively using animal representation throughout the magazines. The nouns used are such as 'bitch', 'pussycat' and 'kitten'.

"Don't get bitchy when your enemy shows her claws. Behave like a pussycat..."

*A pussycat is a
submissive and
playful animal*

(Cleo, February)

In this article, a woman should not fight or even defend herself when assaulted or harassed by her opponent. A woman must act submissive and pleasant in order to win her enemy's heart.

"Go from coy kitten to dangerous feline"

*A coy kitten
suggests a
woman who is
shy*

*A dangerous feline implies
a woman who is sexually
active and desirable by the
opposite sex*

(Cleo, October)

In the article, 'coy kitten' refers to an immature or childish woman who is shy and inactive sexually and also it suggests a woman who is not sexy. However, 'dangerous feline' refers to a matured and elegant woman who is sexually active, attractive and sexy.

"... Nicollette is being lauded as the Queen Bee of the Desperate Wives set..."

*A woman who is always
in control and
domineering others*

(Cleo, January)

The author had chosen to use 'Queen Bee' instead of using 'Queen Control' which is the opposite of 'King Control'. This further suggests that women are portrayed using animal representation which is degrading the value of a woman.

"The bitches in your old office now seem like angels"

↑
Spiteful women

(Cleo, November)

The word 'bitch' refers to a female dog which is also frequently used to refer to a spiteful woman. In this article, the word 'bitches' is referred to women colleagues who are annoying instead of choosing a neutral noun such as 'colleagues' or 'co-workers'. This indicates that women are horrible colleagues to work with.

b) Sex symbol

In the magazines, a woman is seen as a sex symbol in which a woman has always to behave or dress up to be sexually desirable to the opposite sex. There are several nouns which indicate this. The examples are as shown below.

"... things you need to look out for when hunting for this sex kitten's closet must-have"

↑
Sex and kitten are two different things. The combination suggests a sexually active woman who is demure and innocent

(Cleo, October)

Women are described as sex symbols in the magazines that are constantly encouraged and advised to update their sex appeal.

"Send him your sex-goddess vibe via a personal erotic blog"

↑
A woman who is a sexual expert

↑
Pictures and writings with lustful content loaded

(Cleo, October)

A woman is expected to be a 'sex-goddess' or a woman who is sexually expert by creating a blog that contains lustful and erotic photos or writings. A blog is opened for the publics to view and by including personal details about the woman's sex life

in the internet indicates that the woman is commercializing or publicizing her sex life for other internet users to see.

"... BWNs (Best When Naked) have little less to offer than their bodies..."

A name given to a woman who has a great body but has nothing else to offer

BWNs' bodies for the purpose of sexual activities

"But man, BWNs (Best When Naked) are hot with their clothes off. And for that, men are willing to overlook a lot.

(Cleo, January)

In this article, women are described as sexual objects in which BWNs are loved by men because BWNs satisfy the men's desires.

c) Labels Given by Men

In the magazines, the use of sexist discourse is apparent in which men are given the authority to evaluate and label women according to their types and characters. Surprisingly, women are labelled and categorized based on their sexualities which also suggest that women are sex symbols. There are many acronyms which are secret codes used by men to describe women. Here are some of the acronyms that describe women based on a man's point of view.

Title: The names men call us!

Names	Meaning
WOT (Woman on Top)	A woman used to being in charge usually likes being on top, hence this acronym. We (men) call a girl WOT when we get a feeling that she will want to make all our decisions for us, either directly or by proxy. She decides where to buy a house, and

	<p><i>whether we're going to become vegetarians. A WOT also knows her place in bed.</i></p> <p><u>Lose the label: Stop being pushy</u></p> <p><i>We're (men) not asking you (women readers) to roll over for us (although that's sometimes nice, too). But let us feel like men once in a while, for Pete's sake!</i></p>
<p>PMM (Perfect Marriage Material)</p>	<p><i>These are rare. In fact, men these days are beginning to replace this acronym with its cousins, PDM (Perfect Date Material). PMMs embody everything a man could want in his wife, although this differs from one man to the next – one man's PMM is another man's T&G.</i></p> <p><u>Lose the label: Savour it.</u></p> <p><i>Okay, maybe you're tired of blokes throwing engagement rings and stuff. But trust us – this is one label you don't want to lose. Just ask T&G.</i></p>
<p>T&G(Touch and Go)</p>	<p><i>We (men) love T&Gs because we don't need to marry thme – we have a little fun, a couple of bunk-ins and wish each other well and go our separate ways. T&G are the antithesis of PMMs. For many reasons (too loud, too quiet, too domineering, too rude), a woman can be considered a great buddy ... as long as we don't need to wake up next to her for the rest of our life. T&Gs typically find themselves called serial daters by their friends, which is a little unfair, but accurate nonetheless.</i></p> <p><u>Lose the label: Change your tack.</u></p> <p><i>What is it about you that turns men off when it comes to commitment? Often, there's just one niggling habit a woman has that makes her un-marriageable. Find out what it is, and change it.</i></p>
<p>WTS (Way Too Smart)</p>	<p><i>WTSes are not our cup of tea. These women are sharp, cunning creatures and usually do well in their careers. Why we don't like them is because we cannot outwit or out-manoeuvre them if</i></p>

	<p>ever we fall into a disagreement. We leave WTSes to the wiser and older among us men, because they are the only ones with the brains to keep the relationship equal.</p> <p>Lose the label: <u>Forget about having the last say.</u></p> <p>Try to stop intimidating men with your wit and remain more humble. Else, the only man who will ever date you will be twice your age.</p>
<p>PDB (Perfect Dumb Blonde)</p>	<p>Sometimes called Pretty Dumb Blonde (if they have the looks as well), PBDs are essentially airheads. Naïve and foolish in everything they do, some men like PBDs (believe it or not) because it means they are easily conquered and will do all that is asked of them. The antidote to WTSes.</p> <p>Lose the label: <u>Get wiser.</u></p> <p>Keep a diary of your life and what goes on, then use it as a manual later on – if you can avoid repeating the same mistakes you've made before, you're already doing better than most of us.</p>
<p>NTB (Not Too beautiful)</p>	<p>A cruel acronym we reserve for only the most unpleasant of women whom we feel pity for more than anything else. It's not just about physical appearance, though. It's the feeling she gives you when you're in her company – she's nasty, bitchy, whiny. Many good-looking women have wound up being labelled NTB by men because they have such disagreeable characters.</p> <p>Lose the label: <u>Be nice.</u></p> <p>Maybe it's time you realised the reason you're so unhappy is because of you. Happiness begets happiness; misery begets misery.</p>

(Cleo, January)

From the labels given above, it shows that men do not favour decisive, smart and ugly women while favouring other types of women. It indicates that men detest women who are smarter and better than men in terms of career and financial wise which also shows that women have downgrade themselves to be accepted by these men. The article also suggests ways to lose the label in order to win the man's heart.

Besides acronyms, men also give labels to women based on their sexualities. Below are some examples of labels given to women which are mostly based on their sexualities.

Title: 6 things men conclude within five minutes of meeting you

1. *Single or not*
2. *Fun or forever*
3. *Raunchy or restricted*
4. *Sexy or sophisticated*
5. *Predator or prey*
6. *High maintenance or low*

(Cleo, September)

These labels indicate that these are the only things that men can conclude about women within such a short time. It also indicates that these are the only criteria that matters to decide whether or not to date a woman.

4.1.3. Verb/ Verb Phrase

In the magazines, the verbs used are on how to improve women's sex appeal. The purpose for woman to improve on their sex appeal is mainly to create interest and desire in the opposite sex.

"Anyone who has a habit of flirting with her colleagues knows that it can sometimes be useful"

*Seducing, behaving in
a romantic way
without serious
intention*

(Cleo, September)

Besides verbs in improving a woman's sex appeal, there are also verbs used on advice column for women on how to keep their men such as 'pretend' and 'praising'. Surprisingly, the verbs used indicate that women are advised not to be upfront or criticize the men in their lives which also indicate that women are 'silenced'.

1. *'Pretend you've read something that mirrors your situation' (Cleo, February)*
2. *'Stick to the principle of praising positive things rather than criticizing him' (Cleo, February)*

Apart from advice articles on woman and man relationship, there are also articles especially on how to improve or maintain the relationship between women and their female colleagues. Similarly to the verbs used in advice articles on woman and man relationship, women are advised not to be upfront or criticizing their female colleagues. For example, the phrase '*compliment* her new haircut or lipstick' suggests that women are to praise and compliment their female colleagues to please them. Women are advised to be very polite and nice with others to the extent of pretending to like the female colleagues. For example, 'Maintaining eye contact and *laughing* at her jokes.' The phrase 'laughing at her jokes' indicates that women are advised to laugh at any of her jokes even if they are not funny.

Besides that, women's talking in the magazines is described using different kinds of verbs. The verbs used in replacing 'talking' are shown below.

1. *'It's much better that waffling on'*
2. *'You wouldn't jabber on if you were travelling with a friend'*
3. *'Women meet their friends to chat, but men need the excuse of an activity, even if it's just a kick-about'*
4. *'... having the boss overhear you bitching about him..'*

4.1.4 Adjectives

1. accomplished	99. generous(2)	196. qualified
2. admirable	100. genuine	197. quiet
3. afraid	101. girly	198. quirky
4. aggressive (5)	102. glamorous (2)	199. real (3)
5. agile	103. glossy (3)	200. relaxed (2)
6. airhead (2)	104. gluttony (2)	201. resentful
7. aloof	105. good (11)	202. responsible
8. angry (7)	106. good-time	203. rich (3)
9. apathetic	107. gorgeous (2)	204. romantic (2)
10. approachable	108. graceful	205. rude (2)
11. assertive (3)	109. gracious	206. sassy
12. attractive (5)	110. great (5)	207. satisfied
13. award-winning	111. greedy (4)	208. scared (4)
14. bad	112. grown-up (2)	209. secure (2)
15. beautiful (3)	113. guilty (5)	210. self-absorbed
16. better	114. hairy (2)	211. self-conscious
17. biatch (4)	115. happy (36)	212. selfish (2)
18. bitchy (8)	116. hardworking	213. self-oriented
19. bold (4)	117. harmless	214. sensitive
20. bored (4)	118. healthy (11)	215. sensual
21. boring	119. hopeless	216. serious
22. brainy	120. hot (8)	217. settled (2)
23. brand new	121. humble (4)	218. sexy (30)
24. bright	122. hungry (4)	219. sharp
25. bubbly	123. imaginative	220. shiny
26. busy (6)	124. in control	221. shrinking
27. buxom	125. in demand	222. sick
28. calm (3)	126. inadequate	223. silly
29. camp	127. in-charge (2)	224. single (11)
30. capable (4)	128. independent (2)	225. skeletal (2)
31. career (2)	129. indispensable	226. skinny
32. caring	130. inferior	227. sleazy (2)
33. cash-splashing	131. innocent	228. sleek
34. catty	132. insecure	229. slim (2)
35. charming (2)	133. insensitive (5)	230. smart (6)
36. cheerful	134. inspired	231. smooth (2)
37. chic	135. inspiring (3)	232. sold
38. clear-headed	136. intelligent (2)	233. sophisticated
39. clever	137. interesting (2)	234. spoilt
40. comfortable	138. jealous (13)	235. spontaneous
41. committed	139. jerkish	236. stressed (8)
42. compelled	140. kind	237. strong (3)
43. competitive (3)	141. kissable	238. stuck (2)
44. confident (15)	142. lame	239. stylish
45. confused	143. lazy	240. submissive

46. content	144. lazy	241. successful (14)
47. cool (4)	145. lean	242. sultry (2)
48. cool headed	146. less-than-perfect	243. svelte (2)
49. coy	147. lively	244. sweaty
50. crazy (3)	148. lonely	245. sweet
51. creative (4)	149. lonely	246. talented (3)
52. cultured	150. loud	247. tense
53. cunning	151. lovesick (2)	248. terrified
54. cutesy	152. lustful	249. thin
55. dainty	153. Malibu-barbie like	250. thin (11)
56. dangerous (2)	154. mean	251. thoughtless
57. dateable	155. meat-loving	252. thrifty
58. dazzling	156. miniscule	253. tiny (3)
59. delicate	157. miserable (5)	254. tired (8)
60. demanding	158. money minded	255. together (2)
61. demure	159. moody (2)	256. trim
62. desperate (4)	160. multi-talented	257. trouble-making
63. direct	161. muted	258. under- appreciated
64. disciplined	162. mysterious (2)	259. unhappy (5)
65. disgruntled	163. nagging	260. unloveable
66. distressed	164. naïve (2)	261. un-marriageable
67. domineering	165. nasty (3)	262. unpleasant (3)
68. dumb	166. natural (3)	263. unreasonable
69. dumbstruck	167. naughty (6)	264. unsettled
70. dynamic (2)	168. negative (4)	265. unsexy
71. easy-going	169. nervous (2)	266. unsure
72. educated (2)	170. nice (3)	267. untruthful
73. embarrassed (6)	171. noticed	268. upset (2)
74. energised	172. obese	269. va-va-voom
75. enthusiastic	173. obsessed	270. vengeful
76. envious	174. open-minded (2)	271. venomous
77. excellent	175. outgoing	272. vibrant
78. expert	176. overweight	273. volatile
79. fabulous	177. over-worked	274. voluptuous
80. faithful	178. paranoid	275. vulnerable
81. fantastic	179. passionate	276. watm
82. fat (8)	180. perfect (4)	277. wealthy (3)
83. fatigue (3)	181. petite	278. well (2)
84. feminine	182. plain	279. well-known
85. flawless	183. polite	280. whiny (2)
86. flexible	184. poor (2)	281. whole
87. flustered	185. popular (2)	282. wild (2)
88. foolish	186. porcelain-like	283. willowy
89. fortunate	187. positive (9)	284. worried
90. friendless	188. potential	285. young (10)
91. friendly (5)		

92. frightened	189. powerful	
93. frumpy	190. powerless	
94. full (3)	191. pregnant (2)	
95. fun (2)	192. pretty (4)	
96. funny (2)	193. prim	
97. fussy	194. proud	
98. Geisha-like	195. pushy (3)	

In the magazines, the adjectives used are both neutral and non-neutral adjectives. Based on the findings above, the top 5 most used adjectives are ‘happy’ (36), ‘sexy’ (30), ‘confident’ (15), ‘successful’ (14) and ‘jealous’ (13). This indicates a woman is portrayed as someone who is happy, sexy, confident, successful and jealous. There are also a number of adjectives with unrealistic description of women’s ideal appearances. This suggests that women who do not fit to these descriptions are not trendy or not fashionable.

1. *‘At Emilio Pucci and Oscar De La Renta, straight Malibu Barbie-like reigned’*
2. *‘Glowy skin, bold lips, cutesy colours and no-fuss hair play up the romantic, feminine and whimsical side of Spring/Summer 2006’*

(Cleo, March)

Adjectives are mostly used stereotypically in male-female relationship articles. In the magazines women are expected to act or behave certain ways to be able to date men of their interests.

Who he goes for: The type of girl who’s sweet, natural and relaxed.

↑
Adjectives: A woman has to be ‘sweet’, ‘natural’ and relaxed to win a handsome man.

(Cleo, December)

Besides that, the word ‘bitchy’ is exclusively used for a spiteful woman. The examples are as followed.

1. *'Madge comes over all bitchy and camp'*
2. *'Make a friendly comment to show that your overtures are well-intentioned and not part of a bitchy game-plan'*
3. *'If you get to know your enemy better and decide that she really is bitchy or...'*

Throughout the articles in the magazines, women are constantly related to the adjective 'jealous' which indicates that women are always jealous.

1. *'...Paris becoming jealous of Nicole's image'*
2. *'Maybe it's because she thinks you outshine her in the beauty stakes, or maybe she's a co-worker who's jealous of your career'*
3. *'You can be the most outwardly confident person-people envy the way you dress, talk, speak in public...'*

4.2 The existence of sexist discourse

Based on the findings, sexist discourse does exist in the magazines in portraying women. Firstly, the authors of the articles used exclusive terms which are noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe women. For example, the word 'bitch' was formerly a noun for a female dog. However, the word 'bitch' has taken the form of verb (bitch/bitching), noun (bitch) and adjective ('bitchy') to describe spiteful women. There is no specific term for male dog in which to describe spiteful men. Beside that, it was surprising to find the use of noun 'slut' (written by male writer) in the magazine which refers to a woman who is slovenly or sexually immoral. Within the context of the article, 'slut' refers to a woman who has sex with multiple partners. The word 'slut' is a sexist term which applies only to women but not to men which suggest that women are identified with their sexuality. This finding supported the claim made by Cameron (1992) in which she stated that more words are available to insult women than men, especially in sexual terms, and that words for

women's bodies are more taboo than those for men's. Next, sexist discourse also exists in the use of animal representation to describe women. In the magazines women are identified as cats such as 'pussycat', 'dangerous feline' and 'coy kitten'. Cats are known with their characteristics as coquettish and submissive which suggest that women share this animal's characteristics. Besides that, in the magazines nouns are given female gender such as 'mother of all mistakes' and 'karma is a bitch' which supported the claim that 'words become associated with women, they take on negative and often sexual connotations' (Cameron, 1992).

Secondly, the issue of women being sex symbols have never died down instead in the magazines, language used to describe women further reinforce that women are sexual objects or sex symbols. For example in the phrase, *'Men want to know the number of other guys who have had a romp in your secret garden'*. A woman's sexuality is described as 'secret garden' which means that a woman's sexuality is her privacy and seen as something discreet. However, for a man sex is something fun in which it is described as 'a romp'. This is evident to show that women are treated as sexual objects instead of sharing the same idea about sex.

In the magazines, the idea that women are sexual objects is further reinforced with self-help articles in which to improve sex appeal. There are a number of articles on how to improve women's sexiness which indicate that women are striving to look sexually desirable to the opposite sex. The titles are such as *'24 hi-tech ways to get beach-babe sexy!'* (Cleo February, 2006) *'Eat your way to a hotter body'* (Cleo May, 2006) *'(Instead of hotter, why not healthier?)', '7 sins that deflate your sex appeal'* (Cleo August, 2006) and *'100 subtle ways to be sexier'* (Cleo October, 2006).

Next, in the magazines, there are a number of articles that suggest that men have the authority to label and categorize women. They even have secret codes in which to name women. The articles are such as *'You think you're his girlfriend... But does he?'* (Cleo July, 2006), *'Are you a WWI, T&G or LOL? The secret codes guys use for women'* (Cleo January, 2006) and *'6 ways men read you in just 5 minutes'* (Cleo

September, 2006). Based on these titles, men are the actors in which determining the labels suitable for women. The language used in the magazines is as 'the medium through which the self is formed and which shapes the way that we think about the world' (Mills, 1995). Based on this finding, the language is the medium in shaping the identities of women.

Based on the result on the existence of sexist discourse in the magazines, it is apparent sexist discourse does exist. What more surprising, is that sexist discourse exists in women magazines which should not have happened.

4.3 Discussion

From the findings, women are portrayed using both neutral and non-neutral terms. The neutral terms used are both applicable to both men and women. However, from the findings, it is also apparent that some (not all) of the portrayals of women are rather sexist and degrading the value of women. In terms of nouns, female and male authors use language to put labels on women based on their sexuality and appearance. Women are described based on the men's points of view and based on their likings. The nouns used are constructed as such that men have the authority to determine how a woman should act and behave to get noticed or hitched by a man in which degrades the value of a woman as a human being which brings to sexism. Mills (1995) stated that these labels form a belief (by men) that women should act certain ways in which eventually become norms. These 'constructed' norms, which are emphasized in the women's magazines, force women to be confined to what the likings of men.

In terms of verbs used, women are described using both neutral and non-neutral terms. The neutral terms used are applicable to both men and women alike. However, sexist terms (verbs) have several occurrences throughout the magazines. The verbs used suggest that women should act in certain ways towards the society especially

towards men (in relationship with) and women (friends or colleagues). Women in the magazines are advised not to be upfront or criticize upon their dissatisfactions towards other. It indicates that women are 'silenced' (Cameron, 1998). Besides that women who 'can be bossed around' win the men's hearts (not all) compared to women who are 'on top' or 'in charge' are not favoured by men. Based on the feminist theory, this result indicates that men and women are not merely two different individuals but with a hierarchy (Cameron, 1992).

Lastly, the adjectives used to describe women's appearance in the magazines are both neutral and non-neutral terms. The adjectives used are rather unrealistic which put pressures to women to conform to the set of standards presented in the magazines. Women are made to believe that these are the looks that are trendy and updated. Besides that, there is a use of an adjective which is exclusively to describe women such as 'bitchy'. 'Bitchy' is used excessively in the magazines despite of the fact that 'bitchy' is a common sexist term to degrade the value of a woman.

As a conclusion, though the articles used both neutral and non-neutral terms, consideration and interest should be more focussed on the non-neutral terms in which mortify the value of a woman as a human being.

4.4 Summary

The results show that noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives used to describe women in these magazines are both neutral and non-neutral (sexist). The non-neutral nouns used to describe women are such as animal representation, sex symbols and labels given by men. Then, the non-neutral verbs used throughout the magazines are such as man-woman relationship, how to improve a woman's sex appeal and how to improve women's social skills. The verbs used indicate that women are 'silenced' in which they are to act and behave in a way that pleases the society which is then become norms. Besides that, the adjectives used are rather

unrealistic and stereotypical. Unrealistic adjectives were mostly used in describing the latest trends and fashion for women, while, the stereotypical adjectives used are such as that women are always jealous. Then, the adjective 'bitchy' is also excessively used throughout the magazines. These findings and results further supported the claims made by feminists about woman being degraded off 'the full humanity of a woman' (Mills, 1995). Based on these findings and results, it is apparent that sexist discourse does exist in the language of *Cleo* magazines.

This chapter has covered the findings and results which addressed the objectives of the study. It also has discussed on the significant of the findings which then related it to the feminist theory. Lastly, it has evaluated on the existence of sexist discourse in the magazines.

In the next chapter, the researcher would summarize the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

5.0 Overview

This chapter summarizes the study in terms of aims and objectives, descriptions of the chosen texts, literature review, research design and data collection and results in addressing each objective. Then, it goes on to the implications of the findings, recommendations for future research and conclusions.

5.1 Summary

The study focused on the language used in Cleo magazines 2006 which concentrated on the featured articles on the cover by omitting quizzes and interview. The textual analysis was done based on systemic functional grammar at the word and phrase level. The objectives of this study are to look at the terms used to describe women in the magazines such as noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives and to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse in the magazine.

The textual analysis was done on the featured article of Cleo magazines 2006. Cleo Magazine was purposely chosen as it was the best-seller for English language and English language women magazine in Malaysia. Cleo has the circulation of 71 000 with 120 000 readership. Its issues are released monthly which targets 17-29

year-old readers. Since it was launched in 1995, Cleo magazines shot to the top slot as Malaysia's best selling, English-language women's title within three years (ACP Magazine Specialist, 2004). Cleo is also described as a friend and mentor to readers (especially women) in which the featured issues are confidence, naturalness, energy and fun. It is claimed to feature issues about friendships, inspirational figures, fashion, beauty, health, sports, travel and lifestyle (ACP Magazine Specialist, 2004).

There are various studies have been done on the portrayal of women in the media such as content analysis on magazines done by Peirce (1990) and Schlenker, Caron, & Halteman (1997) - as an extension of the content analysis conducted by Peirce (1990). However, there is a lack of studies done on the portrayal of women in the Malaysian media. This study is only analyzing the language used in a magazine which does not represent the Malaysian media. Textual analysis on Malaysian women magazines was done concerning the importance of the relationship between media and the portrayal of women. Language is the crucial element used in the media in portraying women. According to Blazevic (2007), the media portrayal of women has a certain influence on young girls which further supports the fact the importance of media and the portrayal of women. Based on the previous studies, language and sexism are the most controversial issues. According to Renner (2005), sexism is a system of beliefs and practices that affirm the dominance of men over women. Language is formed in such a way that men and women are placed in a hierarchy in which men are superior compared to women in which women are described lesser compared to men. Therefore, the study was done to confirm or deny this assumption or statement about language doing injustice towards women.

The study was a textual analysis which used discourse analysis based on systemic functional grammar at the word and phrase levels. The analysis was done focussing on terms such as noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe woman. Then, based on the findings, the researcher evaluated the existence of sexist discourse in the language used in the magazines especially in describing women.

For the purpose of the study, discourse analysis is used to analyse the language used. The researched looks only at the world level; noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives to describe woman.

Firstly, the researcher identified the articles featured on the cover page and categorized them to sections such as appearance, male-female relations, home, self-development, career development, political/world issues (Schlenker, Caron & Halteman, 1998).

After categorizing the articles, the researcher analysed the titles and read thoroughly each article and located the nouns, verbs and adjectives used in the magazines within the context. Then, the researcher looked at the noun/noun phrase used other than 'woman/women'. Next, the researcher looked at the verb/verb phrase and then adjectives used to describe women. After identifying these terms, the researcher evaluated the existence of sexist discourse in the language used based on the feminist theory.

The first objective was to look to look at the terms used to describe women in the magazines such as noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives. Firstly, based on the results, the nouns used are either neutral or non-neutral terms. The neutral terms were the non-sexist terms to describe women. However, the non-neutral terms used to describe women are such as animal metaphors or representation, sex symbols and labels given by men for different types of women. Secondly, the verbs used to describe women are either neutral or non-neutral terms. Among all the verbs used to describe women, there are substitute verbs which are sexist used to describe women's talk, relationship with man and on how to improve social skills. The way a woman talks is described in such a way that indicates women talk a lot, and most of the times nonsense talking. Besides that the verbs used in to describe how a woman should act in a relationship shows that women should please and praise the men instead of criticizing and being upfront with the men. Then, the verbs used are rather similar in articles on how to improve social skills between female friends and female

colleagues. Women are advised to act nice to the extent pretending to win the heart of the other party. Lastly, the adjectives used in describing women are neutral and non-neutral terms. The adjective 'bitchy' is excessively used throughout the magazines which describe a spiteful woman. Besides that, the finding shows that women are always jealous in which women are always described as jealous and envious towards other women.

The second objective was to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse in the magazine. Based on the findings, it is apparent that sexist discourse does exist in the magazine. There are six issues being put forward.

1. Exclusive nouns, verbs and adjectives for women
2. Women as sex symbols
3. Self-help articles to improve sex appeal
4. Men put labels on women
5. Relationship advice
6. Gendered (female) nouns for negative terms

Firstly, there are negative nouns, verbs and adjectives which are exclusively used to describe women. The terms are sexist merely because these negative terms do not apply to men which show that women's values are degraded. Secondly, it was surprising to find that women are portrayed as sex symbol in the magazines particularly by the men (male author). Men perceive sex as a toy, while sex is something discreet and special for women in which show that men and women value sex differently. Thirdly, there are a number of self-help articles to improve women's sex appeal. Women are encouraged and advised to improve their appearance to be sexually desirable by men instead of being healthy. This shows that women are changing and improving themselves not for personal benefits but to please and to be accepted by the men. Then, in the magazines women are given names and labels by men which indicates that men have the authority to label and judge women. The labels given to women are mostly based on women's sexuality which indicates that

men value women based on their sexualities. Besides that, sexist discourse occurs in relationship-advice articles. Women hold the responsibilities to improve and mend their relationships instead of a two-way discussion between men and women. Last but not least, sexist discourse can be found in the use of gendered-nouns for negative terms. There are negative terms which are given female gender which associate women with negative things.

5.2 Implications of the findings

The textual analysis on these magazines was done based on the feminist theory unlike content and semiotic analyses which are based on “untenable theoretical positions” (Mills, 1995). There is still lack of studies on the language used to portray women in Malaysian Medias. Therefore, the major contribution of this study is to add to the research database mainly on the issue of language sexism which is still lacking especially in Malaysia.

Secondly, the existence of sexist discourse has forced the feminists to rise up and voice up the injustice done by the language in media towards women. Language in the media is crucial in shaping and constructing the images or portrayals of women. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the extent to which the text is ruled by sexist discourse through this study

Lastly, the result of this study will be useful for future media activists who wish to avoid gender-bias language towards women. Therefore, in the future, media activists will be more cautious and critical in using language to portray not only women, but also men alike. Through this study, Malaysian female magazines should pay more attention to the use of language in portraying women and not merely writing for the mere purpose of benefits.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

In this study, there are some information about women are language are not covered in which can be addressed in the future studies.

Firstly, the researcher concentrates only at the word and phrase level of systemic functional grammar in this study while omitting other categories which may or may not relevant in this study. Therefore, this study may not be able to accurately show the real portrayal of women.

The study is done only on the articles featured on the cover in which means that other articles are omitted. Therefore, this study does not represent the portrayal of women in all the content of the magazines.

Besides that the study was done only on English language women magazines which may not accurately portray the Malaysian women as the first language in Malaysia is Bahasa Melayu. Therefore, it is recommended to study on Malaysian Malay magazines.

Lastly, the study is done only to find out the portrayal of women and to evaluate the existence of sexist language in the magazines. There is no study on the readers' opinions and how the language affects the readers.

5.4 Conclusions

This study focuses on the language used in the Malaysian women magazines which is Cleo 2006. It concentrated mainly on the featured articles which are stated on the cover of the magazines by omitting quizzes. Based on systemic functional grammar, the study only analyses at the word level. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to look at the terms used to describe women in the magazines such as

noun/noun phrase, verb/verb phrase and adjectives and to evaluate the existence of sexist discourse in the magazine.

Though there are neutral terms used to describe women in the magazines, there also non-neutral terms (sexist terms) to portray women. Firstly, the nouns used are animal representation, sex symbols and labels given by men for different types of women. Secondly, the verbs used are substitute verbs to describe women who talk a lot, relationship with man and on how to improve social skills. Lastly, the adjectives used in describing women are rather sexist. The adjective 'bitchy' is excessively used throughout the magazines which describe a spiteful woman and the finding shows that women are always jealous in which women are always described as jealous and envious towards other women. The finding for the second objective shows that apparent that sexist discourse does exist in the magazine. Below are the six issues found in evaluating the existence of sexist discourse.

1. Exclusive nouns, verbs and adjectives for women
2. Women as sex symbols
3. Self-help articles to improve sex appeal
4. Men put labels on women
5. Relationship advice
6. Gendered (female) nouns for negative terms

Other studies found out that there are stereotypical and sexism in the media. Similarly, in this study, there are stereotypical and sexism in the language used to portray women. Though the scope of study is different, the results are similar.

Researcher's early assumptions of negative and stereotypical portrayal of women may mislead the researcher's opinions on the language used to portray women. Therefore, the study is based on the feminist theory to avoid the biasness. Then, the study merely analyses at the word and phrase level which do not represent the language of the media as a whole. Next, the study is done on the articles featured

on the cover and not other articles which may be more relevant in portraying women. Besides that, the finding of this study should not be generalised to all Malaysian women magazines as the study is conducted only on English language women magazines. Lastly, the study is done only to find out the portrayal of women and to evaluate the existence of sexist language in the magazines. There is no study on the readers' opinions and how the language affects the readers.

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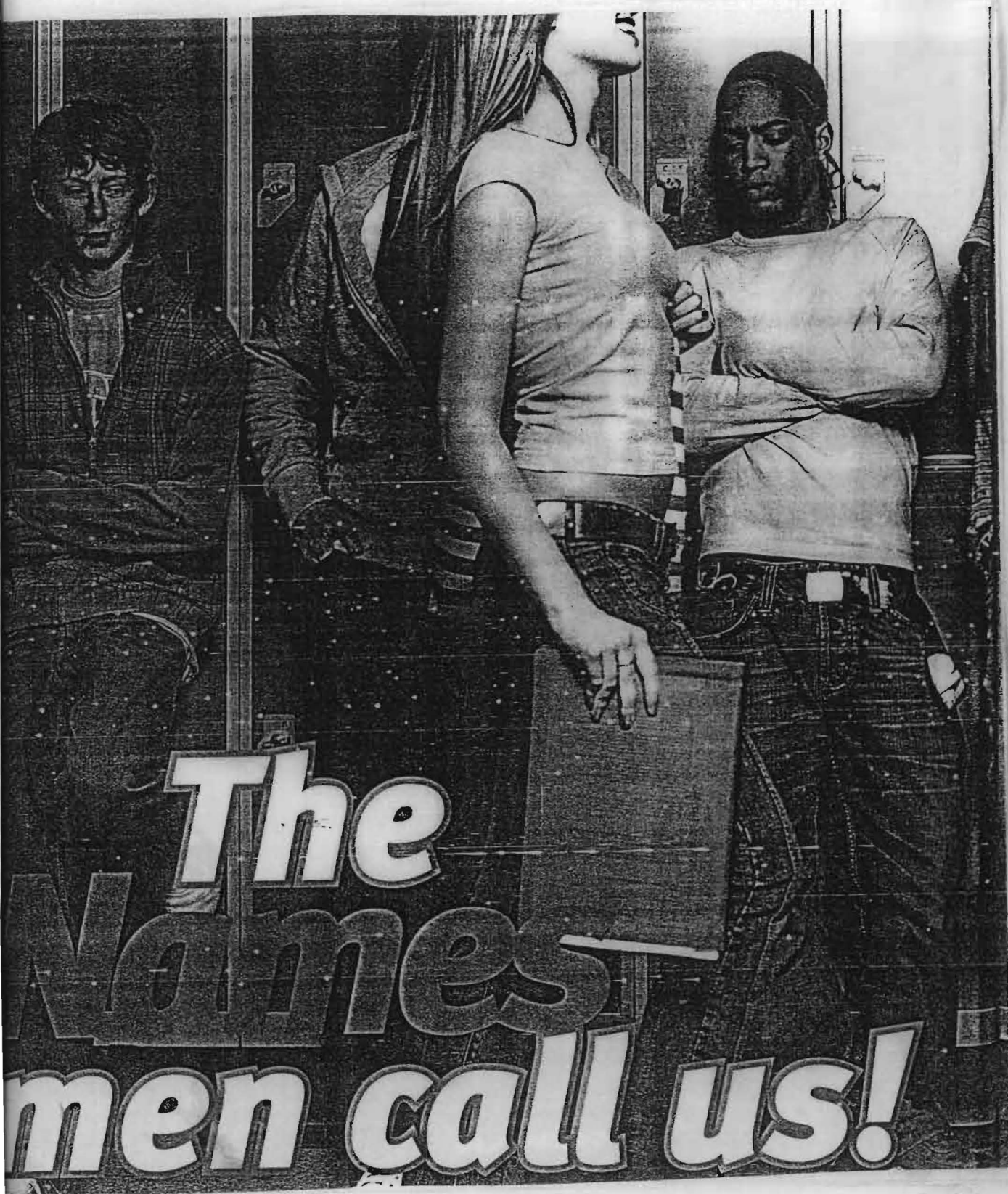
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You think you're his girlfriend, but does he?





100 SUBTLE WAYS TO BE

unresistibly sexy

Sexy is an attitude, the way you carry yourself, the aura that surrounds you when you confidently enter a room. Sexy is about the way you eat, dress, talk and move. Let Deborah Tan, Serene Lim, Becky Kho, Cynthia Chew, Serene Chiang, Daphne Chen and Lee Yan Wei show you some moves.



SIENNA MILLER HAD JUST ENTERED THE ACTING SCENE WHEN SHE HOOKED UP WITH JUDE LAW.

LUCIANA BOZAN WAS WORKING IN A BAR WHEN SHE MET MATT DAMON.



CROWN PRINCE FREDERIK AND CROWN PRINCESS MARY OF DENMARK MET IN A SYDNEY BAR.



MICHELLE WILLIAMS HADN'T BEEN IN A MOVIE FOR YEARS TILL SHE MET HEATH LEDGER.

Catch #1 Mr Gorgeous

WHERE TO FIND HIM: At the beach, gym, work functions or friends' parties.

WHO HE GOES FOR: The type of girl who's sweet, natural and relaxed.

HOW TO WIN HIM: Strike up a friendship.

If you've always thought that the Matt Damons and Josh Hartnetts of the world are on a shelf too high to reach, then it's time to bring out the step ladder. You can wind up with that cute guy you've been obsessing over by a) getting on his radar and b) letting him see how amazing you are.

Firstly, you need an encounter and you need to orchestrate it. Sometimes it only takes a fleeting meeting. Matt Damon and his wife Luciana Bozan met while she was working at a bar. So the next time you're around Mr Gorgeous, introduce yourself. "Try to see him as a person rather than a stereotype," says Lloyd. "Just because he's attractive, doesn't mean he's confident or used to women approaching him. It's probably the opposite - he's good-looking so people are intimidated."

Jason Michael, author of *The Nitty Gritty On Men* agrees. "Guys love friendly, easy-going girls, so just chat about something generic and smile. Ask open-ended questions and share info you think he'll be interested in, rather than vomiting out all your personal details. It'll make

Catch #2 Mr Talented

WHERE TO FIND HIM: Live gigs, pubs, music festivals and exhibitions.

WHO HE GOES FOR: Interesting, inspired, confident women.

HOW TO WIN HIM: Get on his level. if his level is low?

Great musicians, writers and artists have a huge passion in their lives, so proving you're equally inspiring is the key. Guys who have it going on upstairs like girls with wit and substance, which means you can go a bit deeper on the conversation level. Just avoid reeling off your CV, hogging the chat time or turning into a ball buster who competes with him on every issue otherwise you might scare him away! Don't compete!

Men are also impressed by independent girls, because it stops them worrying about you snatching their freedom. "My boyfriend says the moment that melted his heart was when I stood up for him in a group," recalls Sarah, 24. "I'd been in love with him for ages, but didn't have the guts to tell him. Then at a BBQ, his friends were laying into him about his latest sculpture and I stood up for him. He says it opened his eyes to show how strong, caring, and intelligent I was."

Major footnote: Guys are not going to be put off if you show a little vulnerability. "There's something irresistible about a woman who displays a small flaw, because it lets us men feel like we're still the protectors," says Michael. So be as brave as you like but, if you're scared of spiders and one crawls across your foot, feel free to be yourself and shriek your lungs out!

Catch #3 Mr Popular

WHERE TO FIND HIM: Cool bars, footy games, rowing clubs or the races.

WHO HE GOES FOR: Girls who are flexible, positive and vibrant.

HOW TO WIN HIM: Appeal to his fun side.

Getting some one-on-one time with the guy who's always the life of the party can be like trying to pin down a Tasmanian devil on Red Bull. So this is where your friends come in. If you're at a social event, approach him and his posse in a group. Then, while your friends talk to his mates, you can strike up a convo with

...hotter than Brad so
you don't stand a chance
right? Nuh-uh, don't even
say the words "out of my
league". By Melissa
Ironside

...ow to lose
that
"single"
label.
...t differently
get different
... of gny.

The single girl's guide to updating

how many times have you met a really sweet, cute guy and thought, "Gee he'd be a great catch, but he'd never go for me"? If you're anything like my friend Ally, the answer is a zillion. Everytime she tells me about a great guy she's spotted at work, we've the following conversation:

Me: "So, do you think he likes you?"

Her: "Err..."

Me: "Does he have a girlfriend?"

Her: "Umm..."

Me: "Do you reckon he's gay?"

Her: "Well..."

Me: "Ally, have you spoken to him?"

Her: "Define spoken."

Me: "He doesn't know you exist, does he?"

Her: "No. But I don't stand a chance anyway."

The silly thing about this Groundhog Day conversation is that Ally's really amazing. She's the magnum of the ice cream world, the Rolex of the watch shop, she's a supreme pizza plus garlic bread. So why doesn't my friend

rate her chances with any guy who's remotely decent? Because she's used to dating down, not up!

"So many women lack confidence when it comes to meeting men," says psychotherapist Stacey Lloyd. "They think they're not good enough or 'in his league', even when they most definitely are. Instead of settling for Mr Okay, women should aim high because no one is unattainable when you believe in yourself."

Practise in front of the mirror now

Eight moves to make during your dinner date that'll drive him wild with desire.

1 *Folding your hair behind your ear*

The ears are an extremely underrated seduction point. When tucking hair behind your ear, lightly trace its outline with your index finger. Linger for a second at the lobe.

2 *Looking down and gazing up at him*

When you're seated at the table, bring your chin down slightly and gaze up at your date. This conveys the message, "Let's see what you have here for me."

3 *Stroking your collarbone absent-mindedly*

Using the back of your index finger, lightly stroke your collarbone while he's talking to you. It's a distraction that'll work to your advantage!

4 *Touching your lips gently*

When he says something that makes you smile, gently graze your lips with your fingers. He'll be wondering what it's like to kiss you there.

5 *Caressing your upper arm*

If you're right-handed, run your right hand gently up and down your left upper arm. He'll be dying to sit next to you so he can wrap his warm arm around you.

6 *"Accidentally" brushing your foot against his*

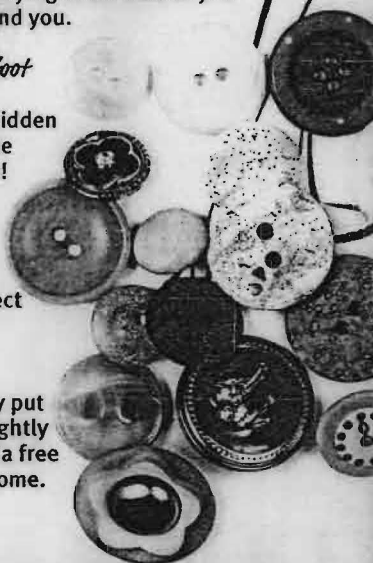
Attempt this only if your legs are hidden from public view by a tablecloth. Be careful not to kick him in the shins!

7 *Fingering the button on your blouse*

Just the one that's resting above your breasts. This should help direct his eyes to where it counts.

8 *Massaging your neck*

No vigorous kneading! Simply put your hand around your nape and lightly squeeze. You might score yourself a free rubdown from him when you get home.



The morning-after face

Surely you don't want him to wake up to drool-crusted lips or a bad case of panda eyes? Have these three beauty saviours ready by your bedside.

Fresh as the morning dew
If you don't have time to dash to the loo for a quick wash up, then mist your face with hydrating waters like *Shu Uemura Depsea Water Yuzu*, RM75, and pat the skin to give it a little wake-up call. Damp skin is just ultra-sexy.

Glow with the flow
You don't want to scare him with a deathly pale pallor. Cheat by rubbing a little rouge like *Bobbi Brown Pot Rouge For Lips and Cheeks In 12 Flushed Pink*, RM90, on your cheeks to look like you're blushing instead.

Bat and flutter
If you have a problem with getting your mascara to stay, get lash extensions at *Strip, Bangsar* for RM170. You'll be free from mascara woes



"WHEN PEOPLE TRY SO HARD TO BE SKINNY, IT'S NOT PRETTY TO ME. BEING COMFORTABLE WITH YOURSELF IS THE SEXIEST THING."

KIRSTEN DUNST